

Arboretum: Traffic Calming

Introduction

How was traffic calming in the Arboretum addressed in the preferred alternative?

As part of ESSB 6392, both the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) have been working with the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) to develop measures that can be implemented to reduce speed and “calm” traffic travelling through the Arboretum. While traffic calming along Lake Washington Boulevard in the Arboretum is not directly addressed in the preferred alternative for the SR 520 I-5 to Medina project, SDOT has developed a traffic calming plan that improves the environment for pedestrians and bicyclists in the Arboretum.

What comments were received?

WSDOT and SDOT received comments from ABGC expressing concern about the speed of vehicular traffic through the Arboretum and potential risks to the safety of pedestrians and bicycles in the park. ABGC identified specific focus areas along Lake Washington Boulevard where pedestrian activity is highest, and SDOT identified segments along the corridor where the speed of vehicles is greatest. ABGC also has concerns regarding the aesthetic impact of traffic calming features in the park. ABGC is interested in moving forward with implementation of a traffic calming plan in the Arboretum in the near term, prior to construction of the SR 520 I-5 to Medina project.

Addressing the problem

How did we identify possible solutions?

SDOT worked with the Seattle Parks Department and ABGC to review pedestrian conditions and develop recommendations for pedestrian and traffic calming improvements on Lake Washington Boulevard between East Madison Street and Foster Island Road.

Review of the existing conditions included analyzing available data regarding traffic speeds through the Arboretum, field observations (including a walking tour with ABGC representatives), and feedback received from ABGC regarding current and future pedestrian conditions on the corridor.

Knowledge of the existing conditions informed SDOT’s development of a preliminary traffic calming plan along Lake Washington Boulevard, which was presented to ABGC on August 18, 2010 for comment. As part of the ESSB 6392 work group and mitigation processes, SDOT and WSDOT are meeting regularly with ABGC to finalize details of the traffic calming plan, among other SR 520-related refinements.

Recommendations

What did we consider?

A comprehensive suite of measures were considered to aid in calming traffic through the Arboretum,

with a focus on elements that improve safety conditions for pedestrian and bicycles and are effective in reducing vehicle speed.

SDOT and WSDOT are currently working with ABGC to finalize the details of the traffic calming plan for Lake Washington Boulevard. Below is a table that contains a preliminary list and description of the proposed elements. This list may be refined as discussions with ABGC continue.

Item	Location	Purpose
Pedestrian Improvements		
Marked Crosswalk	North of Interlaken Drive	Provide visibility at high usage pedestrian area
Marked Crosswalk	At Arboretum Drive	Provide visibility at high usage pedestrian area
Traffic Calming Improvements		
Radar Speed Sign	Southbound, south of Foster Island Road	Educate drivers; reduce southbound speeds through Arboretum
Radar Speed Sign	Northbound, north of E Madison Street	Educate drivers; reduce northbound speeds through Arboretum, particularly approaching high pedestrian activity area
Raised Crosswalk	North of Interlaken Drive at new marked crosswalk	Provide traffic calming; improve pedestrian visibility at new crosswalk proposed above
Speed Cushions (2)	TBD	Reduce vehicular speeds on corridor
Landscaped Curb Bulb	Southeast corner, Lake Wash Boulevard at Foster Island Road	Reduce northbound vehicle speed, particularly for turning traffic approaching intersection, to increase pedestrian safety; provide southbound "gateway" into Arboretum
Sign Improvements	Minor improvements to existing traffic signs	Improve clarity and message of existing traffic warnings on the corridor

In discussions with ABGC on August 18, 2010, the committee recommended that SDOT also implement a pedestrian-activated signal at Arboretum Drive and mark a crosswalk on Interlaken Drive. ABGC would also like SDOT to investigate the possibility of improving the intersection of Foster Island Road and Lake Washington Boulevard. Additional comments from ABGC will be incorporated into the traffic calming plan as work continues throughout fall 2010.

Final TCT recommendation

The Technical Coordination Team (TCT) supports the coordination efforts that have been made thus far between SDOT, WSDOT, and ABGC to identify proposed traffic calming strategies in the Arboretum. Elements of a preliminary traffic calming plan along Lake Washington Boulevard have been presented to the TCT on several occasions; the TCT recommends that SDOT finalize the proposal for a traffic calming plan with ABGC. Proposed elements of the plan include marked crosswalks, radar speed signs, speed cushions, sign improvements, landscaped curb bulbs, and raised crosswalks.